

# NEWS RELEASE

# THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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For additional information: Bill Winter, Director of Communications ♦ (202) 333-0008 Ext. 226

## Wife-beaters with guns?

WASHINGTON, DC — **Who's crazy enough to defend wife-beaters with guns?**

Libertarians, that's who. But they're not crazy — they're just willing to stick up for the Bill of Rights, even in the face of overwhelming public pressure.

"Even wife-beaters have Constitutional rights that can't be taken away by politicians," said Jo Jorgensen, the Libertarian Party's 1996 vice presidential candidate.

Jorgensen's comments were prompted by HR-26, a new bill filed by Rep. Bob Barr (R-GA), which would repeal the retroactive aspects of the 1996 Lautenberg Act. That legislation made it a crime for anyone ever convicted of domestic violence — even a misdemeanor — to own a firearm or a single bullet. Penalty: A \$250,000 fine or 10 years in jail.

"Congressman Barr's bill is a step in the right direction," said Jorgensen, the only woman to be on all 50 state ballots in 1996. "But the Second Amendment is a *basic civil right* — not a reward doled out by politicians for good behavior. So, if no one else has the guts to demand the total *repeal* of the Lautenberg Act, we will." Here's why the Lautenberg Act is a bad law:

- **It suggests that civil liberties are conditional on good behavior.** "In fact, the Bill of Rights lists *inalienable* rights," said Jorgensen. "Being convicted of a crime doesn't make people lose all future rights against illegal search and seizure (the Fourth Amendment); self-incrimination (the Fifth Amendment); or cruel and unusual punishment (the Eighth Amendment). And it shouldn't make them lose their Second Amendment rights, either."
- **It erases the "innocent until proven guilty" concept.** "If someone is guilty of domestic violence, punish them for that crime," urged Jorgensen. "Don't punish them for theoretical future gun crimes they *haven't* committed."
- **It's a uniform punishment for wildly divergent crimes.** "This bill treats all domestic violence the same — whether for violence, or verbal threats, or trespassing, or spanking your children," noted Jorgensen. "It's a one-size-fits-all approach."

Does this mean Libertarians don't care about domestic violence? No, said Jorgensen: "If someone harms their spouse, he should be held liable for criminal penalties or victim-restitution payments. Or, if certain individuals are so clearly and immediately dangerous that their liberty must be curtailed, then they should be arrested, tried, and imprisoned.

"Short of that, the government has no right to nullify our Second Amendment rights," she said. "And repealing the Bill of Rights is no way to show concern about domestic violence."

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Watergate Office Building ♦ 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100 ♦ Washington, DC 20037